

IGUANA IGUANA (Green Iguana). **JUVENILE PREDATION.** Green iguanas have been reported to nest communally as an strategy to decrease predation by terrestrial vertebrates (Rand and Dugan 1983. *Copeia* 1983:705–711). Iguana nests may be preyed upon by several species (Rand and Robinson 1969. *Herpetologica* 25:172–174). Juveniles may suffer particularly high predation (Greene et al. 1978. *J. Herpetol.* 12:169–176.).

During the dry season (April–May) of 1988 the emergence of hatchlings in several breeding aggregations was documented at Hato Masaguaral, a cattle ranch in Guárico State, Venezuela (8°34'N, 67°35'W). While systematically patrolling the breeding

TABLE 1. Predators documented preying on iguanas or with iguana remains in the stomach. Numbers with an asterisk represent events where predators were seen chasing, stalking, or holding pieces of iguana tail. Frequencies marked with an "f" denote more than 10 predation events. *Piaya cayana* was observed on two occasions with unidentified lizard embryos in an advanced stage of development. Predation by *Crocodylus* occurred in outdoor enclosures.

	Size I	Size II	Size III
REPTILES			
Alligatoridae			
<i>Caiman crocodilus</i>		1	
Crocodylidae			
<i>Crocodylus acutus</i>		1	
<i>Crocodylus intermedius</i>		1	1
Boidae			
<i>Eunectes murinus</i>		2	1
Colubridae			
<i>Chironus</i> sp.		1*	
Teiidae			
<i>Ameiva ameiva</i>	4	1	
<i>Cnemidophorus</i> sp.	1		
<i>Tupinambis</i> sp.	1*	1	
BIRDS			
Accipitridae			
<i>Buteo albicaudatus</i>	3		
<i>Buteo magnirostris</i>	6		
<i>Buteogallus urubitinga</i>	f	3	1, 1*
<i>Elanoides fortiscatus</i>	1		
<i>Elanus leucurus</i>	1		
<i>Gampsonyx swainsonii</i>	1		
<i>Geranospiza caerulencens</i>	1		
<i>Heterospiza meridionalis</i>	f		
<i>Parabuteo unicinctus</i>	1	1	
Ardeidae			
<i>Ardea coccy</i>		1	
<i>Casmerodius albus</i>	1		
<i>Tigrisoma</i> sp.	1		
Cuculidae			
<i>Crotophaga ani</i>	1*		
<i>Crotophaga mayor</i>	1		
<i>Piaya cayana</i>	2		
Falconidae			
<i>Falco femoralis</i>	f		
<i>Falco sparverius</i>	f		
<i>Milvago chimachima</i>	1		
<i>Polyborus plancus</i>	f		
Icteridae			
<i>Icterus icterus</i>	4		
Tyrannidae			
<i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>	2*		
Tytonidae			
<i>Tyto alba</i>	1		
MAMMALS			
Canidae			
<i>Canis familiaris</i>			6
<i>Cerdocyon thous</i>	f	1	1
Cebidae			
<i>Cebus nigrivittatus</i>		1	1
Felidae			
<i>Felis pardalis</i>			1
<i>Felis domesticus</i>	f		
Procyonidae			
<i>Procyon cancrivorus</i>	1		

aggregations, incidents of predation on iguana hatchlings were recorded. Patrols were conducted 0800–0930 h and 1630–1800 h for a total of 51 h of observations in 17 days. Other incidental predation events also were recorded, along with stomach contents of road-killed predators on the highway. Prey were classified into three size categories, based upon estimated SVL: Size I <180 mm, Size II 180–239 mm, and Size III ≥240 mm (Rivas, unpubl.).

Table 1 lists species of vertebrates observed preying on iguanas, along with size class of prey and relative frequency of predation. Birds were the most frequent predators (22 species), followed by reptiles (eight species), and mammals (six species). Predation pressure by mammals could, however, be underestimated due to their secretive and nocturnal habits.

The period between the first and last egg hatched was 14 days. During this time, ca. 4800 hatchling iguanas emerged from 120 nests into a dune of ca. 8 ha. This synchrony of hatching produced an invasion of young iguanas into the area. High encounter rate may account for the high number of predation events we observed.

These data suggest that juvenile iguanas suffer heavy predation from birds. This may explain the cryptic behavior of juveniles in tree tops, where they remain motionless for long periods, synchronizing their movements with the canopy wind (Henderson 1974. *Herpetologica* 30:327–332), as well as the juveniles' habit of sleeping in burrows (Brust 1985. *Amer. Zool.* 25:7A).

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